

Student Name:

Date:

Social Justice Poetry Project

GOAL: Students will read and annotate TEN poems on the topic of justice and then create their own original poem, inspired by the other books we have read this year. Each class will choose a winning poet.

The **FINAL DRAFT** of the poem will be due March 20th, 2017 and will be worth 50 points and count as a writing project.

- Student poems **MUST** use **TWO DIFFERENT POEMS**, one from Choices A and one from Choices B, to construct the poem.
- They also must **INCLUDE SIX to EIGHT QUOTES** from the **BGB** and **SIX to EIGHT QUOTES** from those selected poems.
- The final draft must be **40-50 LINES IN LENGTH, TYPED** and meet the English guidelines.
- Each poem should have a unique title that reflects the message of the student's poem.

To prepare, annotate the following poems.

CHOICES A: Each student **MUST USE** one poem from this group in their poem.

#1

"Justice" by Rudyard Kipling

Across a world where all men grieve
And grieving strive the more,
The great days range like tides and leave
Our dead on every shore.
Heavy the load we undergo,
And our own hands prepare,
If we have parley with the foe,
The load our sons must bear.

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Before we loose the word
That bids new worlds to birth,
Needs must we loosen first the sword
Of Justice upon earth;
Or else all else is vain
Since life on earth began,
And the spent world sinks back again
Hopeless of God and Man.

A People and their King
Through ancient sin grown strong,
Because they feared no reckoning
Would set no bound to wrong;
But now their hour is past,
And we who bore it find
Evil Incarnate hell at last
To answer to mankind.

For agony and spoil
Of nations beat to dust,
For poisoned air and tortured soil
And cold, commanded lust,
And every secret woe
The shuddering waters saw.
Willed and fulfilled by high and low.
Let them relearn the Low.

That when the dooms are read,
Not high nor low shall say:-
' My haughty or my humble head
Was saved me in this day.'
That, till the end of time,
Their remnant shall recall
Their fathers old, confederate crime
Availed them not at all.

That neither schools nor priests,
Nor Kings may build again
A people with the heart of beasts
Made wise concerning men.
Whereby our dead shall sleep
In honour, unbetrayed,
And we in faith and honour keep
That peace for which they paid.

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#2

"The Salem Witch Trials" by Jane Doe

It was 1692, in Salem Village that the abhorrence began
A time of pandemonium and darkness that swept across the land
A village of pure jealousy, economic loss, and strife
Where 19 innocent men and women had an end put to their life

A cold winter, young girls experienced turbulent fits
Frightened and confused, they claimed they were bewitched
The girls blamed their affliction on the social outcasts of their town
And suspicion of the Satan's witchcraft circulated all around

Mary Easty was 58 years old, a wife and mother of seven
When she had her kind soul taken away, too early to go to heaven
Respected and religious, everyone was shocked when she was accused
But perhaps it was envy, for they coveted the costly land she'd lose

So on April 22nd, Mary was then taken to examination in court
She remained calm and respectful, denying witchcraft of any sort
"I will say it, if it was my last, I am clear of this sin"
Her eyes quivering with tears, revealing her fear from within

She was sentenced to prison, the court disregarding her pleas
But after a few grisly days, she was once again released
But the young girls were dedicated to argue, debate, and fight
Claiming that Mary's apparition strangles them in the night

It was at midnight, after two days of certainty that she was free
The marshall came into Mary's house and seized her away from her family
Thrown back into prison, and laden with chains
She was condemned to death, her short-lived freedom in vain

She was carted to Gallows Hill, a barren and arid slope
Like the corpse of death itself, deprived of all hope
A shadowy silhouette, anticipating its prey
Prepared to pounce, and steal guiltless lives away

Preceding her execution, she spoke her final goodbyes
To her husband, her children, while everyone present cried
For her parting words were as affectionate and religious as could be
Because, never again, will words be spoken by Mary Easty

The noose clutched her neck, she held her head low
Tears glided down her cheeks, one last time before she'd go
She prayed to her God, softly and subdued she said
"If it be possible, no more innocent blood be shed"

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#3

“Riddle” by William Heyen

From Belsen a crate of gold teeth,
from Dachau a mountain of shoes,
from Auschwitz a skin lampshade.
Who killed the Jews?
Not I, cries the typist,
not I, cries the engineer,
not I, cries Adolf Eichmann,
not I, cries Albert Speer.
My friend Fritz Nova lost his father –
a petty official had to choose.
My friend Lou Abrahms lost his brother.
Who killed the Jews?
David Nova swallowed gas,
Hyman Abrahms was beaten and starved.
Some men signed their papers,
and some stood guard,
and some herded them in,
and some dropped the pellets,
and some spread the ashes,
and some hosed the walls,
and some planted the wheat,
and some poured the steel,
and some cleared the rails,
and some raised the cattle.
Some smelled the smoke,
some just heard the news.
Were they Germans? Were they Nazis?
Were they human? Who killed the Jews?
The stars will remember the gold,
the sun will remember the shoes,
the moon will remember the skin.
But who killed the Jews?

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#4

“Who But the Lord” by Langston Hughes

I looked and I saw
That man they call the Law.
He was coming
Down the street at me!
I had visions in my head
Of being laid out cold and dead,
Or else murdered
By the third degree.
I said, O, Lord, if you can,
Save me from that man!
Don't let him make a pulp out of me!
But the Lord he was not quick.
The Law raised up his stick
And beat the living hell
Out of me!
Now, I do not understand
Why God don't protect a man
From police brutality.
Being poor and black,
I've no weapon to strike back
So who but the Lord
Can protect me?
We'll see.

#5

“The Lonesome Death Of Hattie Carroll” by Bob Dylan

William Zanzinger killed poor Hattie Carroll
With a cane that he twirled around his diamond ring finger
At a Baltimore hotel society gath'rin'
And the cops were called in and his weapon took from him
As they rode him in custody down to the station
And booked William Zanzinger for first-degree murder
But you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears
Take the rag away from your face
Now ain't the time for your tears

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William Zanzinger, who at twenty-four years
Owns a tobacco farm of six hundred acres
With rich wealthy parents who provide and protect him
And high office relations in the politics of Maryland
Reacted to his deed with a shrug of his shoulders
And swear words and sneering, and his tongue it was snarling
In a matter of minutes on bail was out walking
But you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears
Take the rag away from your face
Now ain't the time for your tears

Hattie Carroll was a maid of the kitchen
She was fifty-one years old and gave birth to ten children
Who carried the dishes and took out the garbage
And never sat once at the head of the table
And didn't even talk to the people at the table
Who just cleaned up all the food from the table
And emptied the ashtrays on a whole other level
Got killed by a blow, lay slain by a cane
That sailed through the air and came down through the room
Doomed and determined to destroy all the gentle
And she never done nothing to William Zanzinger
But you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears
Take the rag away from your face
Now ain't the time for your tears

In the courtroom of honor, the judge pounded his gavel
To show that all's equal and that the courts are on the level
And that the strings in the books ain't pulled and persuaded
And that even the nobles get properly handled
Once that the cops have chased after and caught 'em
And that the ladder of law has no top and no bottom
Stared at the person who killed for no reason
Who just happened to be feelin' that way without warnin'
And he spoke through his cloak, most deep and distinguished
And handed out strongly, for penalty and repentance
William Zanzinger with a six-month sentence
Oh, but you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears
Bury the rag deep in your face
For now's the time for your tears

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CHOICES B: Each student MUST USE one poem from this group

#6

“Justice” by Langston Hughes

That Justice is a blind goddess
Is a thing to which we black are wise:
Her bandage hides two festering sores
That once perhaps were eyes.

#7

“Carrying Our Words” by Ofelia Zepeda

We travel carrying our words.
We arrive at the ocean.
With our words we are able to speak
of the sounds of thunderous waves.
We speak of how majestic it is,
of the ocean power that gifts us songs.
We sing of our respect
and call it our relative.

#8

“Bully for Him” by Donal Mahoney

If he were in high school
they'd call him a bully
and take him to

the principal's office
for counseling.
But he's an adult

who believes life
should be the way
he says it should be.

When you run into him
at the coffee shop
he's quick to tell you

why you're wrong.
You listen to him
and politely say

that may be so
but you don't know
and quietly walk away

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#9

“what the dead know by heart” by Donte Collins

lately, when asked how are you, i
respond with a name no longer living

Rekia, Jamar, Sandra

i am alive by luck at this point. i wonder
often: if the gun that will unmake me
is yet made, what white birth

will bury me, how many bullets, like a
flock of blue jays, will come carry my black
to its final bed, which photo will be used

to water down my blood. today i did
not die and there is no god or law to
thank. the bullet missed my head

and landed in another. today, i passed
a mirror and did not see a body, instead
a suggestion, a debate, a blank

post-it note there looking back. i
haven't enough room to both rage and
weep. i go to cry and each tear turns

to steam. I say *I matter* and a ghost
white hand appears over my mouth

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#10

“There Can Be No Justice” by Frederick Kesner

Provide us just scales
with which to measure
determine the truth
provide no displeasure

be objective and distant
make sure you're blindfolded
mete out the verdict
swift and without fail.

But for the value of life
remember your own
Each breath you take
opportunities blown

Justice is never served
for the dead remain dead
their chances forfeited
memories defaulted

punitive arrangements
may placate the bereaved
but the dead remain deceased.

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Planning Area:

Write down the numbers of the two poems that you selected _____

What are important similarities between the poems that you selected and your BGB?

What are important differences between the poems that you selected and your BGB?

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What are common lessons between the poems that you selected and your BGB?

What are different lessons between the poems that you selected and your BGB?

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QUOTES FROM POEMS:

QUOTES FROM BGB
